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NEWS ITEMS

A. O. Garret, head of the department of biology of the Salt Lake High Schools, is a field assistant in forest pathology, Bureau of Plant Industry, for the summer. He has been working in western Colorado, northeastern Utah, and southwestern Wyoming, investigating *Peridermium occidentale*.

Dr. N. L. Britton has received the following letter from a prisoner of war interned in Canada:

KAPUSKASING, ONT., CANADA, July the 13, 1918.

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY, BRONX PARK, NEW YORK CITY.

Dear Sir: I send you this little plant for your kind advice. It grows to about 4 to 5 in. high, found in the bush near Amherst, N. S., and also near the Kapuskasing River. It seems to have a perennial root, with trifoliate leaves; spring alternately from its root-stalk. The roots are fibrous, thin, long and of yellow-brown color when fresh. They taste bitter and keep this bitter taste even when they are dry. Some men at Amherst boil and drink them like tea; they say it is a good remedy for certain ills. Would you kindly send me your worthy opinion on the matter and also the botanical name of the genus and the family to which it belongs. I am a gardener and therefore I take a great interest in plants.

Yours faithfully,

PETER MAURER, Pr. of War, 2724
Kapuskasing, Ont.,
Canada.

The plant referred to, of which a drawing and description were appended, is *Coptis trifolia*, the gold-thread.

Professor Byron D. Halsted, one of the oldest members of the club, and since 1889 professor of botany at Rutgers College, died on August 28. He was born at Venice, N. Y., on June 7, 1852, and was known throughout the country for many contributions to various botanical journals. One of his most recent papers was in *TORREYA* for June, 1917, on "The weight of seeds as related to their number and position."